



American Variant of the Italian Style

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES

By AYMAR EMBURY II



THE MENTOR • DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS • SERIAL No. 93

MENTOR GRAVURES

RESIDENCE OF GEORGE B. PRATT
RESIDENCE OF MARSHALL SLADE
THE WESTERVELT HOUSE

RESIDENCE OF JAMES L. BREESE
THE BRICE HOUSE
MARBLE HOUSE

AS we walk or ride about in town or country we find houses that attract us or repel us, without our being able to say exactly why. We realize that there are certain houses that seem to fit, that are right, and others that are not. Often, too, if we have occasion to pass the same houses a number of times, we discover that our sentiments about them are gradually changing. We have become tired of some houses, and we are growing to like other houses very much, and we wonder why this should be the case. It is my purpose, so far as it may be done, to account for this.

Now, while there is no general explanation which will completely cover every case, there are certain underlying principles of architectural design which account for most of them. Of these principles those particularly applicable to the country house are, first, the appropriateness (or propriety) of the style employed in the house to its location. If in the north, it must be a style suited to our northern winters, with their cold and snow; if in the south, the problem of the summer sun must be taken care of. Secondly, the house must be a unit and not a combina-



Charles M. Baker, Architect

A QUIET AND HARMONIOUS HOUSE OF THE COLONIAL TYPE

tion of unrelated parts. Thirdly, all parts of the house must be in proportion to one another and to the whole house; they must be "in scale."

DIFFERENT KINDS OF HOUSES

There are two distinct ways of designing a house, or any work of art,—one in which the element of surprise is preëminent, and the other where the question of harmony has been considered as an essential. There are certain houses which attract us because of their novelty. They are clever, interesting, and original, and because we instinctively respect those qualities and recognize them at first sight we like the house which expresses them, regardless of its other qualities. As we become familiar with a house of this character we may grow to dislike it very much, and may end by resenting it as merely a "clever stunt." In the long run we look for other and sounder qualities than mere brilliance.

On the other hand, that house in which the architect has sought for simplicity and harmony may not attract us very much when we first see it; but as we continue to pass the house we find that there are not many houses of the same quality. Little things, at first unnoticed, begin to attract us: we find that we do not grow tired of it; it is the sort of house we should like to live in.

Houses, after all, are just like people. We sometimes meet a man who charms us instantly. His talk is brilliant, and there is a good deal



Joy Wheeler Dow, Architect

A HOUSE OF THE "SURPRISE" TYPE

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES

of it; but after months of acquaintance we may find that we much prefer the pleasant, quiet fellow who does not say very much, but says what he has to say sensibly and with dignity.

THE HOUSE THAT SATISFIES

The house which continues to please us must be harmonious throughout, whether designed for the surprise effect or not, and this question of harmony is something which can be felt rather than defined. If a person has any ear for music at all, he knows when a chord is harmonious. So with houses: a person with good taste knows instinctively when a house is harmonious. All its parts must be in relation to one another

and to the whole. You cannot put a Gothic oriel window on a Colonial house, and have the result in harmony, no matter how good the house may otherwise be, or how well designed the oriel window is, and for a house to be completely satisfactory its surroundings must be in character with the house. You cannot put an iron dog on the front lawn of any house and have it look as if it belonged there. It does not even scare tramps, except through their artistic instincts.



Eugene Lang, Architect



Janssen and Abbott, Architects

THREE HOUSES OF THE "SURPRISE" TYPE, WHICH RETAIN THEIR INTEREST ON CLOSER ACQUAINTANCE

THE LACK OF HARMONY

People with good taste, but without education, will recognize inharmonious notes in houses as in music without being able to give the technical reason for the lack of harmony; but in nine cases out of ten an architect can get to the root of the matter at once, and will say that the trouble arises from violation of one of the three principles spoken of. The style may be inappropriate, the architect may have failed to carry out the house in one single style, and there may be what we call technically "loss of scale,"—which means that some of the smaller



AN OLD COLONIAL HOUSE WHICH IS UNOBTRUSIVE
BUT DELIGHTFUL

parts of the building—the windows, the piazzas, or the cornice—are too big or too little for the house of which they form a part.

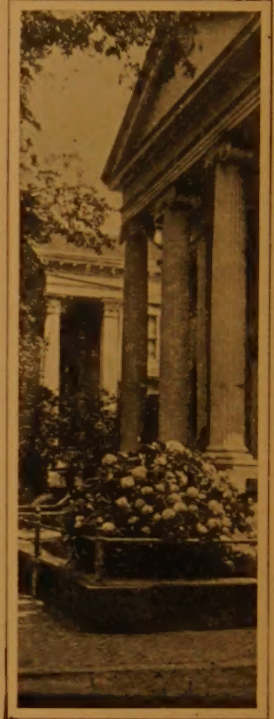
The third reason is probably the most important, since it is the most frequent; for even good men often fail in this matter of scale. There is a certain house not very far from where I live which has a dentil course six inches high forming part of the decoration of the piazza cornice. Now this was designed to be looked at from



A COLONIAL DOORWAY
DECORATED WITH THE
DORIC ORDER

a distance of less than eight feet, and it is immensely too big for its position; so that its bad effect is not due to its being an inappropriate ornamentation to use on a Colonial piazza, but because it is big enough to form part of the cornice of a ten-story office building and to be seen from sixty feet away. If all the ornament on the house were carried out proportionately, or as we say “in the same scale,” one would feel as if the house were occupied by a family of giants.

The reason for the frequency of bad houses, both middle-aged and new, is perhaps that our designers have not stuck to one style long enough fully to master it. We have had too many “fashions” in architecture, and the history of domestic architecture during the last century in America has been marked rather by a thirst for novelty than by any real and logical development. We are



TWO OF THE “ORDERS”
USED IN COLONIAL WORK:
IONIC IN THE FORE-
GROUND, CORINTHIAN IN
THE BACKGROUND

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES

always looking for new ideas, and, continually finding that we have grown tired of them, we have thrown them aside for something new; which in its turn has been welcomed as the last word in good taste, and soon found wanting. We have during the last twenty years again returned to the few simple elements with which our ancestors began, and we are again finding them satisfactory. It may be that this is only a passing fashion in architecture; but the writer believes that we have at last got back to first principles, and that the art of architecture is again pursuing a natural and logical course of development.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES IN AMERICA

It may be interesting to run over the list of styles which have been tried in America. The first settlers simply took the materials at hand and built as economical and comfortable houses as they knew how, designing them in accordance with the traditions of building which they inherited from their European ancestors. Now it happened that in Europe during the Colonial period architecture had gradually grown back from Gothic into Classic forms (those which were brought to perfection by the Greeks and Romans), in much the same slow and deliberate manner that Classic architecture had centuries before been transformed into Gothic.

Seeing, as we do, illustrations of only the perfect flowers of Gothic and Classic architecture, we are accustomed to think of them as two disconnected arts. This is very far from being the fact. Gothic developed from Classic step by step and little by little; each new building perhaps introducing some slight variation of traditional forms, of which the sum total in the thousand years that had elapsed between the perfection of Classic and perfection of Gothic art was a very great one. In like manner Classic art again became preëminent; its essential forms of the column and entablature regaining their ancient proportions, because the architects who used them had knowledge of the Roman forms. And of all the decorative elements which en-



A COLONIAL DOORWAY AT ANNAPOLIS



Keen and Meed, Architects

A MODERN COTTAGE PATTERNED AFTER THE OLD FARMHOUSE

ter into architecture today there is none so important as the column and entablature (together known as the "order") which in their three varieties, the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian, are an almost essential part of every modern building.

Now of course these three orders have no heaven-sent right to exist, nor is there any law, like the law of gravity, which has fixed their proportions; but the fact that more than two thousand years after their conception they still form a very important part of architectural design, in substantially their original forms and proportions, leads us to believe that there must be something peculiarly appropriate to architectural purposes in them. They represent the consensus of opinion in design through the ages, and will probably endure for ages more.



A STEEP-ROOFED ENGLISH HOUSE WITH HALF-TIMBERED WALLS

THE CLASSIC COLONIAL STYLE

It was to these Classic forms that our Colonial designers looked for their decorative and structural features, and our early architecture here in this country was distinctly Classic in its detail, in the treatment of the cornices and the window openings, and in the general shapes of the buildings.

Of course they were not Classic like a Roman temple (the first window introduced into a Roman temple structure would have varied the type), but the decorative features used throughout the Colonial buildings were Classic, and we therefore speak of our Colonial architecture as a variety of the Classic type.

Not all the old



Howard Shaw, Architect

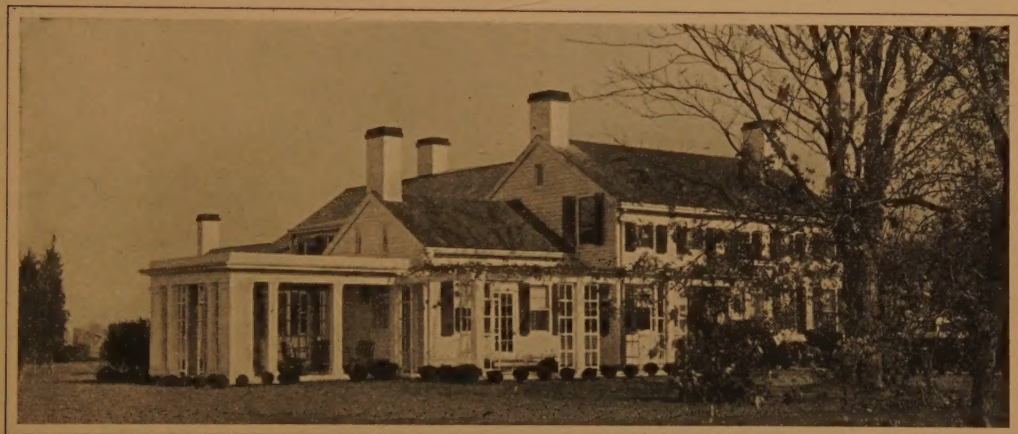
A HOUSE TREATED WITH ITALIAN DECORATIVE FORMS

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES

columnar architecture, however, is by any means really Colonial. Not very long after the Revolution the architects of the world began to learn about Greek art, which was differentiated from the Roman by the greater heaviness of its proportions, and by its greater simplicity. In this country the houses designed in the so-called style of the "Greek Revival" were generally marked by columns two stories in height and of considerable thickness. Houses of this kind are generally lumped with the others as "Colonial"; although very few of the real Colonial houses have two-story columns (Mount Vernon is a notable exception).

TRYING OUT DIFFERENT STYLES

About 1830 we began to learn from books instead of from tradition, and not knowing how to use them, we had violent artistic indigestion. In rapid succession houses in America assumed (or pretended to assume)



Aymar Embury II, Architect

A COLONIAL HOUSE WITH CLASSIC DECORATION

the forms of the Italian villa, the Swiss chalet, the Gothic castle, the English cottage of the time of Queen Anne, the French of Mansard, the Spanish adobe mission, and finally wound up by an attempt to do without any recognized forms at all, which in two of its varieties is known as the Art Nouveau style, or the Chicago School.

None of these styles, including that of the Greek Revival, had any permanent effect whatever: not because the buildings from which they were derived were not beautiful, but because the buildings used as precedents were essentially unfitted for American conditions of living, and because the attempt to fit them to our conditions, in the hands of designers who did not understand them, made the results ludicrous.

The reason for the failure of almost every one of them was the same,—one could not design a house following any of these styles and let in light and air. The enormous two-story columns designed after the Greek made the second-story rooms dark. The Italian buildings, in Italy so

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES

lovely, were so because of their great expanses of plain wall surface, and their low, broad roofs. Windows in the Italian houses are small and few. When the roofs are pitched enough to shed the snow and rain with which we continually have to deal in this country, and the windows are made large enough to let in light and air in our variable climate, the result is not Italian; it is not anything. The Swiss chalet set up in America was so obviously a piece of stage scenery that it almost instantly became a

joke. There are a number of them still to be seen in old suburban localities, and they look like enlarged pigeon houses. The Gothic castle and the Spanish mission were even worse for our living conditions, and, as far as the Queen Anne cottage goes, if Queen Anne had seen what we called by her royal name, she would never have recognized it, so far was it from resembling the plain and simple English cottage current in her reign.

The house with the mansard roof really was not bad in some ways:

the rooms were airy, and the windows were big, and its failure to continue to satisfy us comes from an artistic reason, based, like most artistic reasons, upon general appreciation that things should appear to be what they are. We like a roof to look like a roof, and a mansard roof was so



E. Imrie, Architect

A SIMPLE ENGLISH FARMHOUSE AND, BELOW, ITS AMERICAN COUSIN, IN THE DUTCH COLONIES AROUND NEW YORK



obviously a flat, tin deck, that we soon got tired of it. It suggested that snow would lie on it and it would leak; although, as tin is a very good material if properly used, I don't suppose that this is very often the case. But when most of us feel that it probably would, that is enough.

ESSENTIALS OF SUCCESSFUL BUILDING

The architectural school which is to be in the long run successful must have absolutely one essential,—it must be suited to our needs, convenient,

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES



Forman and Light, Architects

A MODERN HOUSE OF DUTCH COLONIAL STYLE

light, airy, spacious, and comfortable. To illustrate by a comparison: Mission furniture, for example, attracted us because of its novelty, and has lost its attraction because it was too heavy to move around and too uncomfortable to sit in; Mission houses were just as far removed from American needs as Mission furniture. The English cottage type fulfilled our requirements, and plaster houses of this style (sometimes decorated with wooden half-timber forms) have apparently come to stay. These houses have windows enough, are high enough, and have steep enough roofs to keep us warm and dry and lighted.

Although we have completely discarded the "Italian villa," we still use certain Italian decorative forms; notably a wide overhang on the roofs, which is useful in houses in certain parts of the South and West, where the sun is hot, and certain details of ornamentation around the windows and doors. If a stucco house of a form which might belong to any school has its roof treated in the Italian way, we have a house which we call Italian, although it differs notably from the true Italian house, and these houses are attractive to look at and comfortable to use because we have adapted Italian detail to our forms, instead of trying to twist Italian forms to our needs.

Much the same thing is true of our modern houses which follow Colonial precedents. We do not endeavor to have them match exactly Colonial architecture, as it was developed in the South or in Pennsylvania, or in the Dutch settlements around New York, or in New England, but from a general knowledge of all these houses



Aymar Embury II, Architect

THE ITALIAN PERGOLA USED IN COMBINATION WITH THE DUTCH ROOF

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES

we select those features which are suitable to the house we have in mind.

The gambrel roof, for example, in the Dutch colonies was so common that it is often called a "Dutch" roof, and in the old work it was usually low and flat, spreading very far and giving little space in the second story. In the modern houses of Dutch style we have straightened it up and

put in windows, so that there is plenty of space in the second story, and plenty of light and air in the third-story rooms. We have used rather the shape of gambrel roof current in Maryland than the truly Dutch roof; although in other respects the modern work derived from Dutch Colonial is unlike the southern work. We have borrowed freely from all our native sources,—from the southern work we have learned to use brick, from the work around Philadelphia we have come to appreciate stucco. These two materials have been gaining rapidly in favor with both the architectural and the non-technical public of late years; although they will never make us completely forget the lovely white and green of the New England frame house.

The Colonial houses in all the different parts of the country used Classic

motives for the decorative features, and as these were usually made of wood and supported wooden construction they were, appropriately enough, made thinner and lighter than the Roman columns of stone. Our wooden work is as a rule not so heavy as the Roman, nor so light as the Colonial: it occupies a middle ground, varying the forms with the materials. In other words, we are working not from precedent, but from taste and conviction.

A RETURN TO SIMPLICITY

From the illustrations it will be seen that we are gradually reverting from the complex toward



Charles Barton Keen, Architect

A HOUSE DERIVED FROM MANY PRECEDENTS, BUT WHICH HANGS TOGETHER NEVERTHELESS



Albro and Lindeberg, Architects

A GARDENER'S COTTAGE AND TOOLHOUSE AT POCANTICO HILLS, N. Y.

The difficulties of making the roof about the tree watertight would probably be too great if the space beneath were used as a dwelling; in this case the rear end of the building is used merely for the storage of tools. It is a striking novelty in design

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES

the simple. Our houses today are infinitely less elaborate than those of the last three generations, and for that reason we are not so likely to become tired of them. Contrast the towers and turrets and turned columns and twisted woodwork and brackets and infinitude of moldings of the house of thirty years ago with the plain, square Colonial house of the eighteenth century, or the plain square house used today. To achieve his complicated exterior the architect of thirty years ago had to make some of his rooms round, and some octagonal, and some long and thin, with queer corners and bay windows and ingle-nooks jutting out from them, so that there was no space left for furniture nor any agreeable place in which to sit. The result was that inside and out alike the effect was restless, bewildering, and unquiet.

And with our plain and simple forms we have reverted to plain and simple colors. Two, or at most three, tones we think enough to paint our walls and roof; but we insist that they must be harmonious shades of the same color, rather than distinct colors, and we tint our rooms and paper in light, quiet tones, in which the pattern is subdued or suppressed entirely.

Simplicity is what we seek today, simplicity and harmony in general design and in detail.



Aymar Embury II, Architect

MODERN COLONIAL HOUSE OF BRICK WITH A TILED ROOF

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

AMERICAN COUNTRY HOUSES OF TODAY
\$12.50.

By R. A. Cram

HOUSES AND GARDENS
\$8.00.

By E. L. Lutyens

ARCHITECTURE OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

\$40.00. Two vols.

By G. H. Pollard

COUNTRY HOUSES
\$3.00.

By Aymar Embury II

AMERICAN COUNTRY HOUSES OF TODAY
\$5.00.

By S. Howe

ONE HUNDRED COUNTRY HOUSES

\$3.00.

By Aymar Embury II

AMERICAN COUNTRY HOMES AND THEIR GARDENS

\$5.00.

By J. C. Baker

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES FOR COUNTRY HOUSES

\$2.00.

By H. H. Saylor

THE COUNTRY HOUSE

\$1.50.

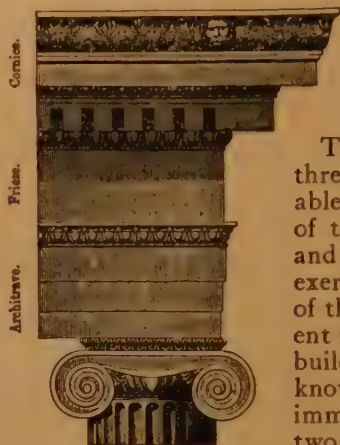
By C. E. Hooper



In referring to the classic forms of column and entablature, Mr. Embury uses the word "order." It might be well to give a little additional information on this subject. The term "order" is used to distinguish the varieties of column and entablature which were employed by the Greeks and Romans. The word "order" covers the column itself—with its three divisions of base, shaft, and capital—and the entablature, which includes the architrave, frieze, and cornice. There are five classic orders; the Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite—but the Tuscan and Composite resemble the Doric and Corinthian respectively so closely that they are not considered in modern work as separate from them.

★ ★ ★

We show on this page a design illustrating the Ionic order. It is readily recognized by the capital, which, in the Ionic order, is always in the form of a scroll. The Ionic column is usually fluted, and it rests on a round base which in turn is supported on a square block. The design on this page reproduces the features of the Temple of Minerva at Priene. Compare with this the Parthenon at Athens, which is strictly of the Doric order, and which offers an interesting contrast. The Doric was the favorite order of the Greeks. It is very simple and severe. The Doric capital is plain, consisting simply of a curved moulding. The shaft has wide fluting, there being about twenty flutes in the circumference of the column. The shaft rests immediately, without any base, on the upper step of the building. The Cor-



AN IONIC "ORDER"

inthian column is ornate. An example is shown in the picture of a doorway printed on this page. The shaft of the Corinthian column may be either fluted or smooth, the capital is elaborately decorative, the motif of the design having been taken originally from the acanthus leaf.

★ ★ ★

These are the essential elements of the three orders. Having them in mind enables one to note with intelligence the use of the classic column in modern houses, and to appreciate the judgment and taste exercised by architects in the employment of these orders. On page four of the present number of *The Mentor* two attractive buildings are shown side by side. A knowledge of the "orders" enables one immediately to distinguish between these two styles of classic columns. The front of the building in the foreground offers a fine example of the Ionic order.

The classic orders are employed not only in the supporting columns of a building, but in interior doorways and arches. The essential elements of the classic orders are so distinct that they are readily recognizable even when they appear, not in a round column, but in a flattened form—called a pilaster—in door frames and in wall paneling.

★ ★ ★



MODERN DOORWAY WITH CLASSIC DETAIL

A little knowledge, even though elementary, of the characteristics of the classic orders adds much to the pleasure and satisfaction of observing the architecture that we find around us in private houses and public buildings.

W. D. Moffat
EDITOR



Architecture in American Country Homes

THE BRICE HOUSE, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Monograph Number One in The Mentor Reading Course



THE Brice house at Annapolis, Maryland, is particularly interesting for two reasons. One of these is the beauty of the house itself; the other is that this is one of the best examples of brick treatment in the United States. And as brick is once more coming into common use, this house is especially worth seeing.

It is one of the largest and most complete Colonial mansions that remain today. As can be seen, it is extremely plain on the exterior. It relies almost entirely for its appearance upon the interesting proportions between the main house and the wing, and between the windows and the wall surface. The interiors are elaborate and stately, the main rooms wainscoted, and the mantels and door heads richly carved.

The Brice house is one of the purest examples of Colonial architecture in America. It was presented to Colonel James Brice by Thomas Jennings, a cousin of the wife of the Duke of Marlborough, upon the occasion of his marriage to Juliana Jennings about 1745, and the mansion takes its name from the first occupants, the Brices. It was begun after 1740, at the intersection of East Street and Prince George Street, and although built as a town residence in the little city of Annapolis the design was rather similar to the Colonial country house than to those customarily built in the city. Colonel Brice, the original owner, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and the house was owned by him or his descendants until 1873, when it was sold to James Martin, the mayor of Annapolis. His daughter, Mrs. Robb, the last private owner of the house, sold it in 1911 to a hotel company, which has repaired it, and refurnished and restored it to substantially its original condition.

This house is by no means so well known as those whose owners were more distinguished men, as for example Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington; Arlington, the home of Robert E. Lee; and Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson; and in consequence its influence on American design has been in the past not so potent as the better known houses. Nevertheless, because of its merit and regardless of its associations, it is becoming more influential in determining the course of American design.



Architecture in American Country Homes

THE JOHN PETER B. WESTERVELT HOUSE AT CRESSKILL, NEW JERSEY

Monograph Number Two in The Mentor Reading Course



THE old farmhouses built by the Dutch Colonial settlers about New York were constructed mostly of red sandstone with wide, overhanging roofs of the peculiar shape known familiarly as "Dutch." Few of these old houses were as magnificent as the Colonial mansions of Maryland and Virginia, or as the famous city houses of Philadelphia and Boston; but they possessed a quaint charm of their own. Within the last few years a style resembling that of these early farmhouses has become a favorite for country houses of small or moderate size.

One of the finest of these old Dutch houses is the Westervelt house that still stands at Cresskill, New Jersey. This house was built by the Westervelt family about 1800; and it is still occupied by descendants of the original builder. Although it is by no means the largest of the old houses, and in many ways is very unpretentious, it is on a main traveled road, and is a nearly perfect example of its kind; so it has probably had more influence on American designers who have followed the Dutch Colonial in their modern work than any other of the old houses of that type. The details of the building are not so interesting as those which can be found in many of the houses around it. But its mass, that is to say the proportions between its height and breadth and thickness, and the relation between the house and the wing, are so nearly perfect that the absence of decorative features around the doorways and windows is not noticed.

It will be observed that in this house, as well as in old Colonial houses, the windows are divided into small panes, and much of the charm of these old buildings is unquestionably due to this fact. It may be considered that big single sheets of glass are easier to clean than windows divided into small panes; but as decorative features, both from the interior and the exterior, they are much less agreeable than the windows in small lights. These windows also assist in preserving what architects call "scale"; in other words, the proper proportioning of the parts to the whole.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, VOL. 3, No. 17, SERIAL No. 93
COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION, INC.



Architecture in American Country Homes

THE RESIDENCE OF JAMES L. BREESE, SOUTHAMPTON,
LONG ISLAND

Monograph Number Three in The Mentor Reading Course



AMONG the buildings that Messrs. McKim, Mead & White have designed are such well-known structures as the Rhode Island State Capitol, the Pennsylvania Station in New York City, the Library of J. P. Morgan, Madison Square Garden in New York City, the Minneapolis Art Museum, and many others of the largest monumental buildings in America. It is interesting, therefore, to find that they have also designed a country house of so informal and picturesque a character as the residence of Mr. Breese at Southampton, Long Island.

In designing this house the architects carried out their belief that an American country house should be exactly what its title indicates; that is, that it should be both American and country, and not an imported idea so built as to suggest monumental work.

The house follows in general Colonial motives. The two-story piazza across the front will at once suggest Mount Vernon; although it is rather like the two-story piazzas used in some of the upper New York farmhouses than that of Washington's home. The treatment of the gable end suggests the Dutch Colonial; but the house is in general free from the influence of any specific Colonial house, or even from that of the Colonial school, in any particular section of the United States.

The architects have followed rather the general spirit of Colonial as it existed throughout, and have created a harmonious whole which is distinctly adapted, and not copied from precedent. Of course much of the interest of the house is due to its picturesque setting. The white and green of the frame Colonial building is not only an excellent background for planting and shrubbery, but is bare and unsightly without them. When we find new Colonial houses apparently of good design which are uninteresting and barren as compared with the old work, we can probably lay part at least of this defect in appearance to the fact that they are not surrounded and embowered in trees as is the old work after the lapse of years.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, VOL. 3, No. 17, SERIAL No. 93
COPYRIGHT, 1913, BY THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION, INC.

RESIDENCE OF MR. MARSHALL P. SLADE, MT. KISCO, N. Y.



Architecture in American Country Homes

THE RESIDENCE OF MARSHALL P. SLADE AT MOUNT KISCO, NEW YORK

Monograph Number Four in The Mentor Reading Course



ONCE in a great while a masterpiece of painting is executed; once in a still longer period a perfect work of sculpture is produced; and, with even greater intervals between, a country house is designed by American architects which is instantly recognized by all as far above the average run of good houses. One of these is the Slade house at Mount Kisco.

This house is in a way deceptive in its appearance: it is far larger and far more expensive than it would seem to indicate. C. A. Platt, the distinguished American architect who designed the house, strives for quality rather than quantity. As usual in Mr. Platt's work, this house is simply and quietly designed for the most part after familiar American motives.

The Slade house is a stucco house, covered with trellis for vines. At each end is a second-story piazza, as well as a first-story piazza, and these "sleeping porches," which are coming to be frequently demanded by modern Americans and are extremely difficult to treat, are in this case unusually well designed. Most sleeping porches are, or appear to be, excrescences, things not part of the original scheme, but forced upon a reluctant designer. Here they are inclosed under the same roof which covers the body of the house, and although their purpose is frankly evident, they add to the building as a whole, rather than detract from it. This particular house is set in a wonderful location on the flat top of a high, steep hill. The entrance is at the side of the house opposite that shown, and the living side faces a garden which extends from the building to the very brow of the hill.

This garden is partly shown; but no picture can do full justice to any garden, because one cannot appreciate the design or plan of the garden, nor its aid in setting off the house. Mr. Platt is one of the few American architects who have made a practice of designing the gardens with the houses. He has accomplished wonderful results with a formal garden close to the house.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, VOL. 3, No. 17, SERIAL No. 93
COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION, INC.



MARBLE HOUSE, NEWPORT, R. I.

Architecture in American Country Homes

MARBLE HOUSE, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Monograph Number Five in The Mentor Reading Course



IN the story of architecture in America it may be noticed that from time to time wealthy citizens have tried to attach to American country life something of the magnificence which accompanies the lives of the nobility in Europe. Such people have called upon American architects to furnish them with mansions suitable for this method of living. In many cases the results have been interesting and beautiful.

One of the best of these palatial mansions is Marble House at Newport, Rhode Island. This house was designed by McKim, Mead & White. It may be said to have been designed in the French style of the period of Louis XVI; but like all the work of these architects it shows no slavish adherence to set forms. For this reason certain parts of it are reminiscent of the Italian palaces and the English Georgian houses of about the time of Louis XVI in France.

The setting of this house is, of course, extremely formal. The shrubs and trees and even the hedges are clipped to symmetrical shapes and are symmetrically disposed about the house. Many of them are set not in the earth, but in jars or vases.

Marble House should be regarded as a splendid example of architecture rather than as a genuine American country house. It has no piazza for summer living; and while there is about it much of distinction, much of formal dignity, and great beauty of design, there is little of the personal and homelike charm that Americans are accustomed to demand in their country residences.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, VOL. 3, No. 17, SERIAL No. 93
COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION, INC.

RESIDENCE OF MR. GEORGE B. PRAIT, GLEN COVE, L. I.



Architecture in American Country Homes

THE RESIDENCE OF GEORGE D. PRATT, GLEN COVE, LONG ISLAND

Monograph Number Six in The Mentor Reading Course



THE house of George D. Pratt at Glen Cove, Long Island, recalls the English Tudor architecture familiar to us from pictures of Haddon Hall, the home of Dorothy Vernon. Although it was not designed primarily as a copy of English work, the English form was used because of the irregular plan and the grouped windows. The owner of the house wished certain arrangements of plan, and also desired the windows to be small and placed in groups instead of large and singly spaced. These two requirements are most easily met by adapting English forms, and so the house was in general designed in English style.

The house is built of stone, and the stones of which the walls are composed are small, more or less irregular in shape, and of variegated colors. The reason for this is that smooth, even stonework never looks well in a country house. It does not afford a good background for foliage, nor does it give that play of light and shade in the wall surface that is pleasant to look at. Old houses invariably have this pleasing irregular quality. The reason for this is that in the first place their builders had no machines with which to cut stone, and the expense of hand-cutting was too great to be undertaken. Another reason is that these old houses have with age weathered to a roughness of surface and a variation of color according as the stones were hard or soft.

In the best modern work architects endeavor to reproduce this agreeable quality of light and shade. Even in slate roofs American architects are now searching not for slates of uniform size and thickness and as neatly cut as possible, but for slates of variegated colors and different thickness and rough surface. They are laid just as well as smooth slates were laid, and the house is just as waterproof; but the effect is many times more attractive. It is because of a just appreciation of the causes of the attractive qualities of English work that the residence of Mr. Pratt is so interesting.

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION
ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, VOL. 3, No. 17, SERIAL No. 93
COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY THE MENTOR ASSOCIATION, INC.